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435 Thus, the capital of our hypotnetical "average" free-hold farmer would total as follows:

3 good cows	150 MT	(ETH$225.-)
2 old cows	30 MT	45.-
2 strong oxen	80	120.-
2 old oxen	30 MT	45.-
2 donkeys	15 MT	22.-
1 mule	40 MT	60.-
6 sheep		30.-
3 goats		15.-
Total	ETH$562.-	(US$230)

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[231] Sales from livestock and livestock produce, in one year, by the average freehold farmer would be about as follows, providing ready cash:

2 old cows	ETH$45.-
1 old ox	20.-
3 sheep	15.-
10 chickens	3.-
300 eggs	3.-
50 kilos honey	50.-
Milk	5.-
	ETH$141.-

With this cash he would buy salt, raw cotton, a toga, some imported spices, coffee, and pay certain cash taxes such as the education tax. These would all be necessary expenditures. The rest would go for other items.

008 It is still tremendously difficult to make an accu-

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

286 pulled from imported cloth. Now most of these dyes are
386 imported from Europe, and many are colorfast only in
[439] cold water (which causes little difficulty as most washing is in cold water). Such embroidery must be paid for extra, but the simple, narrow, single-colored border of the shamma, of the rural type, is included in the price.

286 For such a peasant shamma, the weaver receives
434 from Eth$5 to 8.- depending on whether or not the customer supplied all the prepared cotton. An average, experienced weaver can usually get enough orders to earn about Eth$200.- per year, in the rural area. If he does no farming other than gardening, his food cost may be Eth$140.- per annum. The average weaver is left with more cash than the farmer, who rarely has more than Eth$30.- left in cash at the end of the year. More often the weaver also farms, since his "season" does not conflict with the major active farming season. A hard-working weaver of solid reputation has the opportunity to accumulate comparative wealth, at least theoretically, but since most rural ethnic specialists, including the Falashas, are not much concerned with commercial profit, few do. It occurs more often among Muslim town weavers.

286 The social position of the weaver, apart from his
554 ethno-religious affiliation, gives him a high place among working specialists, almost equal to that of the musician (if it were not for the fact that the weaver is usually non-Coptic). He is above the status of a smith, and there is no suspicion of black magic attached to the

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Somewhat later, when he reaches ten or eleven, the Amhara boy begins to accustom himself to the plow, perhaps trying his hand at it from time to time while his father rests for lunch. Intermittently his ability increases, and by the age of fourteen or so—earlier if the family is short of help—he is given a regular share of the plowing. This may be limited to one or two hours a day at first, but before many seasons elapse he is ready to undertake a full day's work, along with his older relatives.

In his mid-teens the Amhara boy is normally given a small part of his father's land to use for himself. The boy has full charge of plowing and harvesting this land and selling the crops at market. The crops or money he earns thereby is referred to as *gulammā* ("private possession") and is set aside for helping him to get started on his own later on. Eventually the *gulammā* will be used to purchase new clothes, an ox, and presents for his bride. Year by year the father may add a bit more land for the boy's private management, though all together it does not often amount to a very large quantity; he may produce, say, 150 to 200 liters of grain for his *gulammā* in a year (in the Amhara system of measures, about 2 *dāwlā*). When he has saved enough grain to fill a *riq*, a large wicker storage bin plastered inside with cow dung, he is considered ready to get married and strike out on his own.

By the time a boy begins to accumulate his *gulammā* he has learned nearly everything he needs to know for performing the work which will be expected of him as an adult. In his late teens the education is completed, through the mastery of such special techniques as fashioning the yoke and wooden attachments for the plow, and constructing the walls and roof for a house.

The work life of the Amhara peasant is thus a simple continuation of activities with which he has long been familiar. The same is true, *mutatis mutandis*, for those who, following their fathers' footsteps, become priests or sorcerers, governors or warriors, artisans or traders. In these cases, moreover, the foregoing pattern applies to a great extent, since the latter roles are often combined with an agricultural economic base and way of life. (Special aspects of some of these variant patterns will be discussed below.)

This pattern of gradually increased work responsibility is conspicuous in the case of girls. While shepherding and other childhood tasks are shared by both sexes, the Amhara girl begins to do distinctively female work at about six or seven. First she learns to clear seeds from cotton, and to spin, by hand. Later on she is introduced to the more taxing female chores, like fetching water and grinding grain. The progressive increase of the girl's work load is visibly illustrated by the graduated sizes of clay jugs used for carrying water. When she begins to fetch water, the young girl carries a tiny jug, called a *gambo*. As she becomes older and stronger she is given a larger size, a small *enserā*. Finally, the mature female carries the large *enserā*, a jug that holds as much as twenty liters.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

cate that boys sometimes borrow the certificates of more successful friends and enter jobs under those assumed names. Often they live for many months with no livelihood at all. Eventually, some find work as houseboys, shine shoes, or peddle merchandise on the streets; others, on an impulse, sign up for life in one of the military services. Still others are reduced to begging, or stealing, or concocting stories with which to extract help from sympathetic foreigners.

The lives of such boys, whose number is large and steadily growing, are among the chief casualties of Ethiopia's transition to date. As they increase, their misery will become more vocal, and they may constitute an element of political unrest. Whether or not they become a political problem, they are already a social problem.

The modern adolescents, by contrast, comprise a small and determinate number.* In 1958–59, the year in which my research on them began, there were all together about 3,900 students in the academic secondary schools, 3,350 in other special schools at the secondary level, and 760 students at the post-secondary level. One source of information on these students was a questionnaire which was completed by 700 students: 500 at the secondary level, including 40 female students, in a total of 15 schools, and 200 male students in five colleges.[12] Some of the findings from this survey will be woven into the following text where appropriate.

Compared to the rest of their countrymen, and certainly those of the same age, the modern adolescents have lived in luxury. Most students at the secondary level, and all those at the college level, have been boarding students. At no cost to themselves or their parents, they have received full board and room, a token allotment of clothes, and their books. Day students have received instead a monthly allowance of Eth$20,† approximately the same amount that unskilled laborers earn for full-time work. Tuition is also free for all full-time Ethiopian students at all levels.

These "welfare school" conditions were designed to make further education attractive and possible for Ethiopian students, nearly all of whose families either can not or are unwilling to support their children for many years in school. In this, the parents are following long established Amhara custom, for in the traditional society boys who went off to church schools often did so, as we have seen, without the support of their parents, and in any case were expected to gain their livelihood by begging. Nowadays, if their children are admitted to one of the government secondary schools, even tradition-minded

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* And one that grows steadily. In 1958 there were twenty-eight government secondary schools in the empire. By 1964 the number had increased to forty-seven.

† One Ethiopian dollar is equal to (U.S.) forty cents.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

The *dabtarā*'s way of life is more variable than that of the monk, his possibilities for income more diverse than those of the priest. He may be attached to a church as a chorister and receive a share of the church's revenues, as do the priests. Or he may donate his services to the church and earn his living by secular employment. He may work as a scribe at the court of a king or nobleman. He may spend most of his time teaching, gaining support from some large church or monastery. Like many priests he may cultivate land. In any case, he is likely to derive some income from the sale of amulets and from medical therapies. Some *dabtarā* are even said to have wandered about the country as hunters, performing magical services for clients as they go.

Dabtarā are not set off from the populace by special insignia. Some wind a turban around their heads, as do many priests; but others may dress like ordinary peasants. If holding more prestigious posts they may be seen with fly-whisks or wearing a *barnos*. But they are known by the people, who fear and respect them. They are feared because of their magical powers, which are believed capable of rendering bullets harmless and turning *ǎnjarā* to dust. They are respected because of their learning, for they are the only educated status group in traditional Amhara society. If the commoner's relatively impulsive *manner* of speaking is contrasted with the quiet reserve of the nobility, his relatively simple *language* is contrasted with that of the *dabtarā*, who is noted for a studied and circumspect use of language (*qāla-dabtarā*) and for larding his Amharic with literary (i.e., Ge'ez) expressions (*ya-dabtarā amārīññā*).

In the case of the religious elite, then, status is in all cases achieved. While there is a natural tendency for sons of priests and *dabtarā* to follow their fathers' example, they arrive at the status in question only by fulfilling the same norms that are applied to the sons of laymen. These norms, however, differ among the different groups within the clergy. Investiture by an authority emanating from the seat of religious charisma, the Alexandrine Patriarchate, and the related ritual requirement of marriage with Communion, were the basis of priestly status, almost irrespective of the personal attainments of the candidate. Personal attainments were *all* that mattered, on the other hand, in the case of monk and *dabtarā*, but they differed radically for the two statuses.

The qualifications and characters of monks and *dabtarā* are almost diametrically opposed. The monastic state is entered only by means of a sacred rite; the *dabtarā* is in no way ordained, and might even be a "defrocked" priest. The monk's life is normally given to sensual renunciation; the *dabtarā* is normally an acknowledged sensualist (as appears, for example, in the proverb *ka-mesā ya-talaya dabtarā / yādargāl serā* ["a *dabtarā* who is kept from lunch / will work intrigues"][48] and in stories which celebrate the *dabtarā*'s use of his knowledge for private erotic ends). In the monk the virtue

*793 869 222 five weeks before it is ready to be woven into a tsifit, a food hamper and table around which the Amhara meal is eaten. Because the students cannot afford so long a hiatus from their studies, the grasses are dried only a week or so, in order to lighten them for the trip back [735] to the highlands. During their stay in the lowlands, the students support themselves by begging food from local farmers. Enterprising students often gather twice the amount of gramta they can carry, leaving the surplus to be taken up to the highlands in January.

*793 869 [442] The gramta is brought to the student's hut at the kiyne school for storage and drying. Although the students are anxious to sell immediately upon drying, both price and demand are low then, since the weavers, peasant [286] women, have no leisure for tsifit making until March. In *[192] the meanwhile, the student makes either traditional umbrellas of gramta for sale at the regional market, or seleyen, shrouds which he sells in the churchyard to mourners.

• [434] Students also beg crops, a portion of which they consume and the remainder of which is sold at market. For a four week period, during October and November, the student begs a traditional double handful of pulses from farmers. During a two to three month period from February to April, students beg cereals and other crops (especially, cayenne). Because the amounts of produce

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

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obtained are often considerable (100 kilos and more), arrangements must be made for obtaining a donkey.

[735] However great his needs may be, a student cannot
[442] expect to participate in all of these activities, since this would leave insufficient time for his kiyne studies. However, gramta gathering and pulse begging are sometimes both engaged in during a single year.

Thus, the young debtera student finds himself transported from the benign enviornment of his natal parish to one in which only self-reliance and resourcefulness can secure his chosen goals and maintain his physical well-being. Ultimately, he must make a bitter choice
[442] between professional and material satisfaction. The
[735] profits from gramta sales, and the foodstuffs he has begged would much ameliorate his misery. Yet, in spite of his pressing subsistence requirements, the student sets aside only a minor portion of his profits for these needs. He exchanges most of these goods for money, which he retains as a fluid and durable capital with which to purchase necessary professional articles (mainly books) and to support his future commercial ventures. During the years of his kiyne studies, his assets accumulate at the rate of perhaps E$25. per annum.[25]

[25] A significant sum where per capita gross national product is E$116. (EAS:134); E$1.=U.S.$0.40.

*756 *793 The debtera-healer faces two practical obstacles [751] to obtaining public recognition of his power. First, his most frequent works are prophylactic kitabs; however, prophylactic success can be assessed only over a period of many years.[45] Second, the overt expression of abinet powers is often prosaic, without visible signs *[787] of the extraordinary forces at work. These two difficulties [539] in communicating his power are met, in part, by the debtera's display of esoteria during diagnosis, when he manipulates avdunigist texts in the presence of his clients, and during the preparation of therapy, when the otherwise secretive debtera sends his client to obtain some exotic ingredient which is necessary for the work.

*756 *793 *755 Mithat. The debtera goes beyond these displays, however, to simulate, through the use of mithat, dramatic demonstrations of his putative magical powers (asmat). The debtera distinguishes mithat from other abinet subjects by the fact that mithat require no recitation or ritual beyond the spurious performances required to impress his public, and that the mundane materials used in the work are sufficient to produce the desired effects.

[434] [45] The sale of kitabs usually provides the abinet-using debtera with the greatest portion of his income.